

INDEXES TO ACCOMPANY THE TAPES FROM THE "RIBBONS OF MEMORIES" PROJECT

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1983/146**

Oral interview of  
Armis Theodore Sepponen &  
Margaret Genevieve Sepponen

February 17, 1979

**Conducted by Edward & Gerda Sundberg**

**Transcribed by Rocklin Historical Society**

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ARMAS & MARGARET SEPPONEN  
RIBBONS OF MEMORY  
INTERVIEWED BY EDWARD F. & GARIDETH SUNDBERG  
FEBRUARY 17, 1979  
AMERICAN- SCANDINAVIAN ETHNIC HERITAGE  
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

"WOULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US YOUR FULL NAME?"

ARMAS THEODORE SEPPONEN.

"WHEN AND WHERE WERE YOU BORN?"

I WAS BORN IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, DECEMBER 7, 1910.

"WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF YOUR PARENTS AND THE GRANDPARENTS  
YOU REMEMBER?"

MY FATHER'S NAME WAS KARL AMOL SEPPONEN. HIS NAME WAS  
. . . . . AT THE TIME HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO . . . . .  
AFTER HE LEFT FINLAND BUT HIS NAME WAS SEPPONEN.  
MY MOTHER'S NAME IS SENJA KATRINA SEPPONEN AND HER MAIDEN  
NAME WAS NISULA.

"DID THEY COME FROM FINLAND?"

YES . . . . . FINLAND IN THE . . . . . AREA.

"DO YOU KNOW THE NAMES OF ANY OF YOUR GRANDPARENTS?"

NO, JUST SEPPONEN AND NISULA, THAT'S ALL I KNOW.

"WERE YOU EVER TOLD HOW YOUR PARENTS CAME TO THE UNITED STATES?"

No, JUST TO SEEK THEIR FORTUNE AND BETTER WORK CONDITIONS, LIKE A LOT OF FINNS JUST LEFT FOR A BETTER LIFE.

"WERE THEY MARRIED IN FINLAND?"

No, THEY MET IN BUTTE, MONTANA AND MARRIED THERE.

"DID THEY KNOW EACH OTHER IN FINLAND?"

No.

"DO YOU KNOW HOW YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER CAME TO THE UNITED STATES, WHAT ROUTE THEY FOLLOWED?"

MY FATHER LEFT FINLAND AROUND 1900 AND CAME INTO CANADA FIRST. THEN HE EMIGRATED TO THE UNITED STATES. MOTHER CAME TO NEW YORK IN 1905 AND EVENTUALLY THEY MET AROUND 1908 OR 1909, IN THE MONTANA AREA.

"WHAT EVER ATTRACTED BOTH OF THEM TO MONTANA?"

WELL, MY DAD ROAMED AROUND FOR AWHILE DOING LUMBER WORK AND MINING AND THEN HE WORKED THE MINES AROUND BUTTE, MONTANA. MOM WENT TO WORK AT DIFFERENT PLACES AS TYPICAL HOUSE MAID OR COOK, THEN SHE WOUND UP IN MONTANA AS THE BOARDING HOUSE COOK. THAT'S WHERE THEY MET.

"DID THEY STAY IN MONTANA AFTER THEY WERE MARRIED?"

FOR AWHILE. THEY WERE MARRIED IN MONTANA IN 1909 AND

MOVED TO CALIFORNIA WHERE I WAS BORN IN 1910.

"MAY I JUST INTERRUPT A LITTLE BIT, WHAT KIND OF SCHOOLING OR TRAINING DID YOUR PARENTS HAVE IN FINLAND?"

THE AVERAGE SCHOOLING THROUGH ELEMENTARY AND WHATEVER THEY HAD BEYOND ELEMENTARY, . . . . WAS KIND OF A COMBINATION OF REGULAR SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOL, SO THEY HAD SOME EXTRA SCHOOLING BEYOND ELEMENTARY.

"DID THEY HAVE ANY TRAINING OR JOBS BEFORE THEY CAME HERE?"

I DON'T THINK SO. MOM NEVER MENTIONED DOING ANY EDUCATION OR TRADE BEFORE SHE CAME AND DAD PROBABLY JUST DID RANCHING.

"DID THEY EVER SAY ANYTHING ABOUT HOW THEIR PEOPLE FELT WHEN THEY LEFT THE OLD COUNTRY, THE PEOPLE WHO WERE LEFT BEHIND?"

WELL, NO, THEY NEVER ELABORATED ON FEELING, JUST THE USUAL, SORRY TO GO BUT THEY WERE GOING.

"THERE WAS NO OBJECTION FROM THE PARENTS?"

NO. THEY JUST UP AND LEFT.

"HAD ANY OF THE FAMILY COME TO THE UNITED STATES OR TO CANADA BEFORE YOUR PARENTS LEFT?"

NO, NOT THAT I KNOW OF.

"THEY WERE THE FIRST OF THE FAMILY TO COME?"

YES. DAD WAS THE OLDEST AND OF COURSE HE CAME, BUT NONE

OF HIS OTHER RELATIVES CAME AHEAD OF HIM OR WITH OR DURING THAT TIME. MOM, THE SAME WAY.

"DID ANY OF THEM EVER FOLLOW? WERE THERE ANY OTHERS IN THE FAMILY WHO CAME?"

LATER ON, MY DAD'S LITTLE SISTER CAME TO CALIFORNIA. MOM, IN LATER YEARS, HAD A BROTHER WHO CAME TO CANADA, THAT'S ALL I KNOW OF.

"HOW DID THEY LEARN TO SPEAK ENGLISH IF THEY TOLD YOU?"

THEY NEVER TOLD, THEY JUST LEARNED FROM SOMEONE ELSE, COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE AS THEY WORKED AND LIVED, AND SO FORTH.

"DID THEY EVER TELL YOU OF ANY OF THE HUMOROUS SITUATIONS THEY GOT INTO?"

"OR NOT SO HUMOROUS, BECAUSE THEY COULDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH?"

I DON'T RECALL, I MIGHT THINK ABOUT IT LATER, I DON'T RECALL ANY SPECIAL HUMOROUS OR UNUSUAL BECAUSE OF THEIR LANGUAGE OR LACK OF UNDERSTANDING. I CAN'T THINK OF ANY RIGHT NOW.

"DID THEY EVER GO TO SCHOOL IN THE UNITED STATES, TOOK ANY EDUCATION OF ANY KIND?"

I THINK THEY TOOK SOME TRAINING, ESPECIALLY TO GET THEIR CITIZENSHIP PAPERS. NO, THEY DIDN'T REALLY GO TO A SCHOOL AS SUCH.

"THEY DID BECOME CITIZENS?"

YES, THEY STUDIED TO GET THEIR CITIZENSHIP PAPERS.

"AFTER THE FAMILY SETTLED IN OAKLAND AND YOU WERE BORN, WHAT WAS YOUR FATHER'S WORK THERE?"

HE WORKED IN THE SHIPYARD AS A CARPENTER. HE WANTED TO GET OUT OF THE MINES BECAUSE HE REALIZED THAT WAS A VERY GOOD OCCUPATION. HE WORKED AS A LUMBERJACK IN THE LUMBER MILLS FOR AWHILE BUT WHEN THEY CAME TO OAKLAND HIS FIRST BIG JOB WAS IN THE SHIPYARD AS A CARPENTER, A ROUGH CARPENTER. THAT WAS HIS TRADE FROM THEN ON.

"DID YOUR MOTHER EVER TELL YOU ABOUT ANY OF HER WORK IN THE FINN BOARDING HOUSE?"

YES, SHE WAS A COOK IN THE BIG LUMBER MINING CAMP AS A MAIN COOK BACK IN THESE BIG LUMBER BOARDING HOUSES AND THAT'S WHERE THEY MET. THERE WAS ONE INTERESTING EPISODE. MOM MADE, I BELIEVE IT WAS DONUTS, AND HIS FIRST REMARK WAS, "THESE ARE TOUGH."

"HOW MANY MEN LIVED IN THAT BOARDING HOUSE?"

I DON'T RECALL BUT SHE SAID SHE ALWAYS WORKED WITH SEVERAL COOKS SO IT WAS A GOOD-SIZED CAMP.

"DO YOU KNOW HOW SHE FOUND THAT CAMP?"

I DON'T KNOW.

"AFTER YOUR FOLKS WERE SETTLED IN OAKLAND AND YOU WERE BORN, WHAT KIND OF A HOUSE DID YOU GROW UP IN, CAN YOU DESCRIBE THAT?"

MY DAD BUILT HIS OWN, LITTLE HOME. IT WAS PROBABLY, AT FIRST, A SINGLE BEDROOM COTTAGE, BUT HE ADDED ON ANOTHER BEDROOM. THE HOUSE STILL STANDS AFTER ALL THESE YEARS. THE HOUSE WAS BUILT IN, LET'S SEE, I REMEMBER ABOUT 1905 OR 1906 HE WAS BUILDING THE HOUSE WAY OUT IN THE BOONDOCKS OF OAKLAND, WHICH IS CLOSE TO THE OAKLAND AIRPORT NOW.

"DID HE DESIGN THE HOUSE?"

WELL, I SUPPOSE SO, IT WAS SIMPLE, THE USUAL TYPE HOUSE.

"DID YOUR MOTHER EVER AUGMENT THE FAMILY INCOME AFTER SHE BECAME A MARRIED WOMAN?"

NO, JUST A HOMEMAKER AND MOTHER.

"DID SHE HAVE ANY SPECIAL HOME ARTS OR CRAFTS?"

NO, SHE WAS AN EXCELLENT COOK AND PREPARED AND MADE HER OWN CLOTHES FOR HER FAMILY AND HERSELF. IF YOU REFERRING TO PAINTING OR THAT TYPE OF WORK, NO.

"ALSO CROCHETING, KNITTING, THAT KIND OF THING?"

YES, WHEN SHE HAD TIME, SHE DID SOME KNITTING. I REMEMBER HER MAKING THE RAG RUGS. SEVERAL TIMES SHE WOULD BORROW A LOOM, NOT VERY OFTEN. SHE USUALLY COLLECTED THE RAGS AND SOMEBODY ELSE MADE THEM BUT SHE DID DO THAT TYPE OF WORK.

"DID YOUR PARENTS SPEAK FINNISH AT HOME?"

YES. IT'S FUNNY, WHEN I STARTED SCHOOL THEY WANTED TO LEARN MORE ENGLISH SO THEY INSISTED WE TALK ENGLISH AT HOME, SO THAT THEY COULD LEARN ENGLISH BETTER. MY FINNISH EVAPORATED, A LITTLE.

"SO YOU SPOKE FINNISH BEFORE YOU WENT TO SCHOOL?"

YES. BUT IT WAS JUST A SIMPLE, LIKE ROY RUHKALA SAID, THE OLD FINNISH WE USED AND SOME OF THE WORDS WE DON'T EVEN UNDERSTAND ANY MORE. BUT ANYWAY, I DID NOT SPEAK FINNISH TOO WELL IN MY YOUNGER DAYS BUT JUST GOT BY, AND LITTLE BY LITTLE, MORE ENGLISH WAS SPOKEN IN THE HOME.

"DO YOU RECALL ANY OF THE FINNISH THAT WAS SPOKEN IN YOUR HOME, MAYBE THROUGH A FORM OF PRAYER OR SOME SAYING?"

No.

"COULD YOU SAY ANYTHING IN FINNISH FOR ME?"

WELL, LET ME THINK, AFTER A WHILE.

"OKAY, WE'LL GO BACK TO THAT."

"DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FINNISH BOOKS OR MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS?"

YES, WE WOULD GET SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS, LIKE . . . . .  
IT'S USUALLY A WORKING MAN'S NEWSPAPER, NO SOCIAL, NOT EXACTLY IWW BUT IT WAS USED FOR THE WORKING MAN. MOM, IF I RECALL, DID GET SOME KIND OF A LITTLE FINN PAPER THAT WAS PREDOMINANTLY FOR THE LADIES.

"YOU SPOKE OF YOUR FATHER AS A WORKING MAN WHO WAS A CARPENTER IN THE SHIPYARD. DID HE HAVE TO BE INVOLVED OR WAS HE INVOLVED IN ANY OF THE UNION WORK? IT MUST HAVE BEEN AT THE TIME WHEN THAT WAS FORMING."

YES, WELL IN THE EARLY PART OF THE SHIPYARDS, I DON'T KNOW. LATER ON, WHEN WE MOVED TO THE SACRAMENTO AREA IS WHEN HE JOINED THE CARPENTER'S UNION AND HE WAS A FULL-FLEDGED FINNISH CARPENTER. SO HE DID JOIN THE UNION AND HE WAS A REAL, 100% UNION MAN.

"WHERE WOULD THEY HAVE CALLED HOME, WHAT TOWN?"

WELL, CITRUS HEIGHTS, WHICH IS A SUBURB OF SACRAMENTO, WOULD BE HOME FOR MANY YEARS. I DON'T THINK YOU CALL SACRAMENTO, WELL REALLY, UNTIL LATER ON WHEN DAD HAD A HEART ATTACK, AND RECOVERED, SO THEY FINALLY SOLD THEIR RANCH AND MOVED INTO SACRAMENTO SO, I GUESS, THEN SACRAMENTO WOULD BE THEIR HOME FOR THE LATER YEARS.

"YOU SAID RANCH. SO HE WENT FROM BEING A MINER TO BEING A SHIP'S CARPENTER, TO A RANCH?"

WELL, I'LL PUT IT THIS WAY, HE WAS A CARPENTER, ON ACCOUNT OF MOTHER'S HEALTH, THE DOCTOR SUGGESTED LEAVING THE BAY AREA TO GO WHERE IT WAS A DRIER CLIMATE SO THEY INVESTIGATED THE TERRITORY AROUND FRESNO, DRY COUNTRY REALLY, AND THEY INVESTIGATED THE AREA AROUND SACRAMENTO AND FOUND THAT THE CLIMATE WAS MUCH BETTER FOR HER BRONCHIAL PROBLEMS, SO THEY BOUGHT THIS, LITTLE 10 ACRE RANCH AND IT HAD THE TYPICAL FAMILY ORCHARD, PEACHES, APPLES CHERRIES, WHATEVER; A COW AND A HORSE, THE USUAL PIGEONS, PIGS AND CHICKENS, QUITE A FEW CHICKENS SO HE HAD A RANCH, YOU HAD TO WORK OUT AND



MAINTAIN IT AND EARN A LIVING.

"ABOUT WHAT YEAR DID HE GO OUT TO THE RANCH?"

WELL, LET'S SEE, HE LIVED BEFORE 1910 IN OAKLAND, LET'S SEE, 1915, ABOUT 1920. THEY GOT THIS RANCH AND DAD BUILT HIS ONE, LITTLE HOME ON THIS RANCH.

"HOW LARGE A FAMILY WERE YOU?"

JUST MY BROTHER AND I, ONLY TWO.

"WHAT IS YOUR BROTHER'S NAME?"

KARL, SAME AS MY DAD, BUT HIS MIDDLE NAME IS MAX. SO THERE WERE TWO OF US. HE IS A VETERINARIAN.

"IN CITRUS HEIGHTS, WERE THERE OTHER FINNS YOUR PARENTS COULD ASSOCIATE WITH?"

THERE WERE THREE OR FOUR OTHER FAMILIES SCATTERED OUT. WEREN'T MANY AROUND THERE AT ALL. MOST OF THE FINNS WERE EIGHT OR TEN MILES NORTH IN ROCKLIN. THERE WERE A FEW SCATTERED AROUND SACRAMENTO. IN THE EARLY DAYS, IN THE CITRUS HEIGHTS AREA THERE WERE VERY FEW FINNS.

"WHAT WAS FINNISH ABOUT YOUR HOME?"

OH, THE USUAL, THE OLD FASHIONED RAG RUG ON THE FLOOR, PICTURES OR PAINTINGS THAT CAME FROM FINLAND. THE BUTTERMILK CHURN, THE TYPE THAT YOU CRANKED, THE ONE THAT GOES UP AND DOWN, THE EVER-LASTING COFFEE POT ON THE STOVE THAT NEVER GOT COLD. MY DAD DIDN'T DRINK MUCH COFFEE IN THE

EARLY PART OF THE MARRIAGE, AS FAR AS I REMEMBER. MY MOM, SHE WAS THE COFFEE DRINKER.

"WHAT ABOUT, UP IN THE CITRUS HEIGHTS AREA. WHAT WERE THE OTHER PEOPLE? THERE WERE NOT MANY FINNS, YOU SAID."

NO, THERE WAS MAYBE ONE, TWO, ABOUT FOUR OR FIVE FAMILIES ALL SCATTERED OUT. THEY WERE SEVERAL MILES APART.

"WHAT WERE THEIR NAMES?"

ONE WAS THE SAELO? FAMILY, ANOTHER WAS THE HERMANSON FAMILY. ALMA KING WAS A SINGLE LADY, THERE WAS THE SAUDIE FAMILY IN FAIR OAKS. ANOTHER FAMILY I FORGOT IS . . . . . THEY CAME TO THE BAY AREA FOR AWHILE THEN THEY MOVED TO SACRAMENTO.

"WAS IT BIG ENOUGH TO HAVE SCHOOLS OUT THERE OR DID YOU HAVE TO GO ELSEWHERE FOR SCHOOL?"

WE LIVED ABOUT A MILE FROM THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. MY BROTHER & I WALKED OR RODE OUR BIKES TO SCHOOL. THE HIGH SCHOOL WAS NEARBY SO THAT WAS WHERE THIS RANCH WAS, BETWEEN THE HIGH SCHOOL AND THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. THERE WERE NO CLUBS OR FUNCTIONS RIGHT THERE FOR THE FINNS AT ALL. IT WAS EITHER ROCKLIN OR THEY HAD A LITTLE GATHERING OF THE FINNS IN SACRAMENTO BUT NOT AROUND THE COUNTRY WHERE WE LIVED.

"DO YOU REMEMBER GOING TO A FINN CHURCH AS A CHILD?"

NO.

"DID YOU GO TO CHURCH AT TIMES?"

NO. THE FOLKS, THEY JUST WALKED AWAY FROM RELIGIION. ALTHOUGH THEY WOULD QUOTE SOMETHING RELIGIOUS, BUT MY FOLKS GOT AWAY FROM THE CHURCH. I NEVER DID GO TO A FINN CHURCH AS A YOUNSTER.

"WHAT ABOUT ORGANIZATIONS, IF THEY DIDN'T GO TO THE FINN ORGANIZATIONS BECAUSE YOU SAID THERE NOT MANY THERE, DID THEY BELONG TO ANY AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS OR CLUBS OR LODGES OR ANYTHING?"

NO, THEY DIDN'T REALLY JOIN, OH, MAYBE LIKE A GRANGE, A FARM, COMMUNITY TYPE, OR A KIND OF COMMUNITY CLUBHOUSE. BUT THEY DID KEEP IN CONTACT WITH THE FINN ORGANIZATIONS IN BERKELEY. THIS LITTLE GROUP IN SACRAMENTO AND IN ROCKLIN. MY DAD BELONGED TO THE . . . . . YEARS AND YEARS AGO IN ROCKLIN.

"WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL HELP, AND SO ON, IN THE AREA? WHAT COULD YOU COUNT ON FOR DOCTORS, HOSPITALS, NURSING CARE, DENTISTS?"

WELL, SINCE WE LIVED ABOUT THREE MILES FROM ROSEVILLE, THAT WAS THE CLOSEST DOCTOR, RIGHT THERE IN ROSEVILLE, THEY HAD SEVERAL DOCTORS. EITHER THEY PHONE UP, OR THE FAMILY DOCTOR WOULD COME OUT OR THEY WOULD JUST DRIVE IN, EITHER WAY.

"WAS THERE EVER ANY SERIOUS ILLNESS?"

YES, MY DAD HAD EAR PROBLEMS AND LIGAMENT PROBLEMS IN THE KNEES AND SO FORTH. ALTHOUGH HE WAS A WIRY, TOUGH WORKER, HE HAD HIS HEALTH PROBLEMS TOO. MOM, HER HEALTH WAS PRETTY, DOGGONE GOOD.

"DID YOUR FATHER BELONG TO ANY TEMPERANCE ORGANIZATIONS?"

WELL, THE . . . . IN ROCKLIN.

"DID HE PRACTICE HIS TEMPERANCE?"

YEAH, THEY WEREN'T DRINKING PEOPLE. ONCE IN A WHILE, IF THERE WAS A GET-TOGETHER, DAD MIGHT HAVE A BEER, OR A GLASS OF WINE, WHAT WAS THE FINN WORD FOR THAT BEER . . . . OR ONE OR THE OTHER. HE WOULD MAKE IT HIMSELF, ONCE IN A WHILE BUT HE WAS NO DRUNKARD. HE DIDN'T SMOKE, EITHER. NEVER DID SMOKE. MY FOLKS NEVER SMOKED, WHICH SHOWS, MY BROTHER AND I DON'T SMOKE EITHER.

"IN YOUR CHILDHOOD, DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FINNISH GET-TOGETHERS, ETC.? TELL US ABOUT THEM."

NOT WHERE WE LIVED. SINCE THEY CAME FROM THE OAKLAND AREA, BERKELEY AREA, ANY BIG DOINGS IN BERKELEY, WE WOULD MAKE IT A POINT TO DRIVE DOWN IN AN OLD MODEL T OR MODEL A; IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL HOURS, GO DOWN AND STAY WITH FRIENDS OR RELATIVES. THEY HAD A BIG FUNCTION MAYBE AT THE FINN HALL, A PLAY OR A MUSICAL, A DANCE, MAYBE A BIG PICNIC. THERE WAS A BIG PICNIC DOWN THERE THEY CALLED IT EAST SHORE PARK OR SOMETHING EVERY SUMMER, PROBABLY THE . . . . TIME, IN JUNE THERE, THEY WOULD HAVE THE BIG DOINGS. I REMEMBER GOING DOWN THERE QUITE FAITHFULLY. IF THERE WERE ANY BIG DOINGS IN ROCKLIN, AT FINN HALL, WHETHER IT BE A PLAY OR A DANCE, WHY, WE WOULD COME HERE.

FOR THE FUNCTIONS RIGHT NEAR WHERE WE LIVED, WAS OUT AS A FINN FUNCTION.

"YOU WERE NOT A CHURCH-GOING FAMILY. DID YOU CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS?"

YES, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT.

"WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CHRISTMAS?"

WE HAD THE TREE. SANTA CLAUS WOULD BRING PRESENTS THAT WOULD BE THERE IN THE MORNING. MOM WOULD MAKE LUTEFISK FOR THE FINN CELEBRATION AND SANG A FEW OF THE FINN SONGS BUT THEY DIDN'T ATTEND FINN CHRISTMAS SERVICES, AS SUCH.

"BUT THERE WAS A CELEBRATION OF THE OCCASION?"

YES, THEY KEPT IT AS THEY DID IT IN FINLAND, THEY DIDN'T GO TO ANY CHURCH FUNCTION. I DON'T RECALL DOING IT AS A YOUNG BOY, ANY SPECIAL CHURCH FUNCTIONS.

"WHAT COULD YOU EXPECT TO GET AS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT?"

THE USUAL THING TO WEAR, AS SUCH.

"THE HOME WAS NOT SO THAT YOU HAD TO DO WITHOUT AT CHRISTMAS TIME?"

WELL, DURING THE DEPRESSION, IN THE EARLY 1930'S, IT WAS A LITTLE ROUGH, DIDN'T HAVE MUCH. IN FACT, ONE CHRISTMAS, DAD MADE HIS OWN CHRISTMAS TREE. A STICK OF WOOD, AND SOME BRANCHES AND DRILLED HOLES AND BUILT HIS OWN TREE. MOM DECORATED IT WITH THE OLD CANDLES, THE POPCORN STRINGS AND SO FORTH. IT WAS VERY SIMPLIFIED BUT GAVE US A HOMEY ATMOSPHERE, A HAPPY CHILDHOOD.

"YOU WERE JUST EXPLAINING TO US THAT IT WAS A HAPPY HOME EVEN THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN TIMES WHEN THERE WAS NOT A LOT OF MONEY. SO YOU DIDN'T FEEL YOU WERE POOR?"

WELL, YES AND NO. DURING THE DEPRESSION MY DAD COULDN'T WORK SO I THINK WE WERE A LOT MORE FORTUNATE THAN SOME PEOPLE. WE HAD OUR RANCH THERE AND HAD OUR OWN COW AND HORSE AND ANIMALS, POULTRY AND WHATNOT, RAISED OUR OWN FOOD. WE HAD VEGETABLES, LOTS OF FRUIT TREES, MOM DID HER OWN CANNING, COOKING. SO DURING THE DEPRESSION WE GOT BY PRETTY WELL. IT WAS ROUGH AND TOUGH.

"WHAT ABOUT PEDDLERS, THE TYPE OF PEOPLE WHO CAME TO YOUR PLACE TO SELL THINGS?"

THE ONES I REMEMBER WAS THE WATKINS PRODUCT MAN CAME AROUND EVERY SO OFTEN. IN THAT PART OF THE COUNTRY WHERE WE LIVED MOST OF THE YEARS THERE WEREN'T ANY REAL VEGETABLE OR FRUIT PEDDLERS AS SUCH. USUALLY, ON SATURDAY WAS SHOPPING DAY. FOR MANY YEARS, WHEN DAD WORKED IN SACRAMENTO, HE WORKED A HALF DAY AT A LOT OF CONSTRUCTION JOBS AND THEN WOULD SPEND TIME DOING THE SHOPPING FOR THE WHOLE WEEK, PRACTICALLY.

"HOW DID YOUR FATHER GET FORTH AND BACK?  
HOW DID HE GET FROM YOUR HOME TO SACRAMENTO?"

HE HAD A CAR. I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN, BUT HE ALWAYS HAD TO ASK FOR A RIDE. HE EITHER WALKED TO A CORNER AND BUM A RIDE OR HIKED, SO TO SPEAK, OR MAYBE KNEW SOME OTHER CONSTRUCTION WORKER IN THAT AREA WHERE HE CAUGHT A RIDE. THEN HE FINALLY BOUGHT A CAR TO GO BACK AND FORTH TO WORK. IN THE EARLY WINTER MORNINGS IT WOULD PRACTICALLY BE A FAMILY CHORE

TO GET OUT THAT CAR, GET IT STARTED AND WARMED UP, JACK UP THE REAR WHEEL OF A FORD, POOR HOT WATER IN THE CARBURETOR, AND START CRANKING. IT WAS REALLY A CHORE.

"WHAT YEAR WAS THAT FORD CAR?"

LET'S SEE, WE LIVED IN CITRUS HEIGHTS IN THE 1920'S, IT WAS PROBABLY THE EARLY TWENTIES, MODEL T. AND THEN PROBABLY A MODEL A WOULD BE NEXT.

"WHAT KIND OF GAMES DID YOU PLAY? YOU HAD VERY FEW NEIGHBORS, PROBABLY."

"THERE WERE ONLY TWO OF YOU."

WELL, YES, . . . , HOW WOULD YOU CALL IT, GAMES LIKE THAT, BROTHER AND I, WHICH IS POOL. WE KEPT TO THE RANCH. WE DIDN'T GO PLAYING AROUND MUCH. WE WEREN'T SLAVES BUT WE HAD OUR CHORES TO DO. AFTER SCHOOL WE WOULD COME HOME, LIVESTOCK TO FEED, CHICKENS OR GET EGGS IN THE CHICKEN COOP OR PICK FRUIT OR VEGETABLES, OR WHATEVER, AND WE KEPT BUSY.

"DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE GAMES YOU MADE UP?"

NO, NOT REALLY, THEY WERE JUST CHILDHOOD GAMES, OUT IN THE MUD, PROBABLY.

"NOW THE WORK THAT YOU DID AROUND THE RANCH, WERE YOU PAID FOR THAT?"

NO. JUST A FAMILY DEAL.

"WHAT ABOUT YOUR FATHER? NOW DID WORLD WAR I AFFECT HIM IN ANY WAY, YOU WERE PROBABLY TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER."

WORLD WAR I, THAT WOULD BE AROUND 1917-18, ALONG THERE, HE WORKED IN THE SHIPYARDS.

"HAS HE EVER PARTICIPATED IN POLITICS AT ALL, THE UNIONS?"

NO, HE DIDN'T PARTICIPATE IN POLITICS. HE WAS QUITE AWARE AND KEPT UP ON THE INFORMATION, READING ABOUT IT AND WAS FOR THE WORKING MAN.

"DID HE BELONG TO ANY ORGANIZATIONS FOR BETTERMENT OF THE WORKING MAN'S CONDITION?"

NO, I DON'T RECALL ANY. HE DID BELONG TO THE . . . . .  
I DON'T RECALL RIGHT NOW OF ANY PARTICULAR, NO I DON'T.

"WHAT CONTACT DID YOUR PARENTS KEEP WITH FINLAND?"

OH, LETTER WRITING. THEY WROTE FAITHFULLY BACK AND FORTH AT CHRISTMAS TIME AND EVERY ONCE-IN-A-WHILE BETWEEN TIMES THERE WOULD BE A LETTER GOING TO OR FROM FINLAND.

"DID THEY VISIT?"

NO, NOT UNTIL, I'D SAY, IN THE 1950'S, THEY MADE A TRIP TO FINLAND FOR THE FIRST TIME. I DON'T RECALL THE YEAR, 1955 OR 1956.

"HAVE YOU KEPT THE CONTACT WITH FINLAND GOING?"



THE ONLY WAY IS WITH CHRISTMAS CARDS TO SEVERAL RELATIVES,  
THAT'S ALL.

"HAVE YOU VISITED?"

No.

"HOW HAVE YOU KEPT YOUR FINNISHNESS, BY JOINING CLUBS OR  
STUDY?"

THE ONLY CONTACT HERE IN RECENT TIMES, SOME OF THE FINNISH  
PEOPLE FROM CITRUS HEIGHTS, FAIROAKS, CARMICHAEL, FOLSOM,  
SURROUNDING AREAS REORGANIZED INTO WHAT YOU CALL FINLANDIA-  
CLUB OF SACRAMENTO VALLEY. SINCE QUITE A FEW FINNS WERE  
COMING FROM FINLAND AND LIVING IN THIS AREA THEY SPEARHEADED  
THE REORGANIZATION OF THE FINNS, AMERICAN FINNS, DESCENDENTS  
AND HALF-FINNS INTO A CLUB, SO WE JOINED AND FINALLY, I  
WAS THE PRESIDENT FOR TWO YEARS OF THIS CLUB, SO THAT HAS  
BEEN OUR CONTACT. WE HAVE REALLY ENJOYED IT.

"WOULD YOU PLEASE GIVE US YOUR FULL NAME?"

MARGARET GENEVIEVE MACKEY SEPPONEN.

"HAVE YOU EVER HAD ANY OTHER NAMES BESIDES THOSE?"

YES, MARGARET GENEVIEVE LOPSOMEN. MY NAME, LOPSOMEN WAS MY DAD'S NAME. THE NAME MACKEY WAS MY STEPFATHER'S NAME. I WAS HIS CHILD FROM AGE 4 ON. SO I WENT BY THE NAME OF MARGARET GENEVIEVE MACKEY.

"MACKEY ALMOST SOUNDS FINNISH?"

IT WASN'T MAKI, HE WANTED IT MACKEY BECAUSE HE WANTED SO MUCH TO BE THOUGHT OF IN TERMS OF BEING AN ENGLISHMAN, BUT IN FINLAND HIS NAME WAS SOMETHING ELSE AND HE PICKED UP THIS NAME WHEN HE CAME TO AMERICA. IT DIDN'T RELATE TO HIS NAME IN FINLAND AT ALL.

"WERE BOTH OF YOUR BIOLOGICAL PARENTS FINNISH?"

YES.

"YOUR STEPFATHER WAS ALSO FINNISH. SO YOU HAVE GROWN UP IN A FINNISH HOME."

YES.

"WOULD YOU GIVE US YOUR MOTHER'S NAME?"

. . . . . THE LAST NAME WAS HER MAIDEN NAME.  
MY DAD'S NAME WAS VICTOR . . . . LOPSOMEN.

"THE FULL NAME OF YOUR STEPFATHER?"

JOHN WALTER GETULA, BUT WHEN HE CAME TO THIS COUNTRY HE CHANGED IT TO MACKEY AND THAT'S VERY INTERESTING.

"DO YOU WISH TO TELL US MORE ABOUT IT?"

YES. THE WORD GETULA, TRANSLATED MEANS FOX AND WE KNOW THAT WHEN THE ENGLISH AND THE FINNISH BECAME . . . . . - SO MANY WORDS IN ENGLISH ENDED WITH I OR A WHEN THE FINNS SAID THEM SO THEY BEGAN SAYING, OH, FOXY INSTEAD OF GETULA WHICH IS THE TRANSLATION OF THE WORD GETULA. SO HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE CALLED FOXY BECAUSE HE LEARNED THAT MEANT SNEAKY. SO HE THOUGHT, I MUST ADOPT A NAME THAT WOULD BE UPLIFTING AND HAVE PEOPLE LOOK UP TO ME, AT LEAST HAVE THE FEELING OF UP AND UP. SO HE THOUGHT OF MAKI, WHICH TRANSLATED, MEANS HILL. PEOPLE LOOK UP THE HILL BUT HE DIDN'T WANT IT TO BE SPELLED THE FINNISH WAY SO HE MADE IT MACKEY AND HE WAS JOHN WALTER MACKEY FROM THEN ON. FORGOT THE GETULA ENTIRELY.

"DO YOU KNOW WHERE THESE THREE PEOPLE CAME FROM . . .?"

WHEN YOU SAY THREE PEOPLE, MY MOM . . .

"YOUR MOTHER AND THE TWO FATHERS?"

THEY ALL CAME FROM THE HELSINKI AREA OF FINLAND.

"DID ANY OF THEM KNOW EACH OTHER IN FINLAND?"

No.

"WOULD YOU TELL US HOW EACH ONE OF THEM CAME TO THIS COUNTRY IF YOU KNOW?"

THEY ALL CAME BY WAY OF SHIP. THE THREE OF THEM CAME INTO THE CANADIAN PORT. MY DAD AND MOTHER CAME AT DIFFERENT TIMES BUT THEY ALL WENT DIRECTLY ACROSS CANADA TO THE WEST COAST IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. THEY DID NOT MEET, HOWEVER, UNTIL AFTER THEY HAD BEEN THERE SEVERAL YEARS. MY STEPDAD CAME INTO CANADA ALSO. HE VERY SOON DRIFTED DOWN INTO THE UNITED STATES.

MY REAL DAD STAYED IN CANADA. MY MOTHER, AFTER DIVORCE, WHICH WAS AN UNHEARD-OF THING, LEFT CANADA AND CAME INTO MONTANA AND THEN TO WYOMING. MEANTIME, MY STEPDAD HAD WANDERED ACROSS THE UNITED STATES FROM CANADA, BUT THEY HAPPENED TO MEET AT A FINN GATHERING.

"DO YOU KNOW WHY THEY CAME ACROSS?"

YES, IT WAS TO COME TO A NEW LIFE. THERE WAS SOME OPPRESSION A RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION SEEMED TO BE FROM THE BACKGROUND THINKING BUT PRIMARILY IT WAS A NEW WAY OF LIFE AND ALL THREE OF THEM WANTED ADVENTURE.

"DID THEY KNOW ANYONE IN THE UNITED STATES WHEN THEY CAME HERE?"

MY MOTHER KNEW SEVERAL PEOPLE. IN FACT, THEY WERE THE ONES WHO ARRANGED AND OFFERED TO HAVE THE MONEY TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY BUT SHE WOULDN'T ALLOW IT UNLESS SHE WOULD PAY IT ALL BACK. WHEN SHE CAME TO THE FAMILY WHO HAD ALLOTTED THE MONEY FOR THE CROSSING, SHE STAYED WITH THEM AWHILE. THEN, SHE HAD TO WORK HARD TO PAY IT BACK. SHE AND MY DAD WEREN'T ABLE TO SAVE TOO MUCH MONEY AND AFTER SHE GOT DIVORCED, THEN SHE WAS ABLE TO SAVE MORE MONEY TO GET IT PAID BACK, FINALLY.

"WHAT KIND OF WORK DID SHE DO?"

MY MOM WAS, I THINK YOU CALL THEM . . . . BESIDES  
COOKING, BOARDING HOUSES AND BEING JUST A GENERAL JANITOR.

"AND WHAT ABOUT LITTLE BABY, MARGARET?"

SHE TOOK ME WHEREVER SHE WENT. SHE WAS A LIBERATED PERSON, I'M AWARE OF THAT NOW. I KIND OF FELT THAT WHEN I WAS GROWING UP. SHE BOUGHT A CHINESE LAUNDRY WITH THE HELP OF SEVERAL FINNISH PEOPLE WHO ALLOWED HER AND ME TO LIVE IN THE BASEMENT OF ONE OF THE HOMES, VERY CHEAPLY. THEY WERE INTERESTED IN HER AND ME. SO SHE WAS ABLE TO SWING THE PURCHASE OF A CHINESE LAUNDRY. THE AMAZING THING IS SHE WAS FRAIL AND SMALL. SHE LOOKED FRAIL AND SMALL BUT MOM WAS EVIDENTLY SISU, THAT HAD A PLAY IN IT BUT SHE WAS DETERMINED THAT SHE WAS GOING TO RUN A LAUNDRY.

I REMEMBER THE IRON, WHICH SHE TOOK INTO MARRIAGE AND TO MY STEPDAD. I LEARNED TO IRON WHITE SHIRTS. IT WAS A FULL FOURTEEN INCHES LONG AND IT WAS SO HEAVY MY SHOULDERS USED TO ACHE WHEN I DID THE IRONING. SOME OF THE IRONING WAS DONE FOR PAY, THAT'S HOW SHE EARNED SOME EXTRA MONEY WHILE SHE WAS MARRIED TO MY STEPDAD.

"DID YOUR MOTHER HAVE ANY HELP IN THE LAUNDRY?"

IT WAS A TENTATIVE KIND. SHE WOULD WORK ALL NIGHT IF SHE HAD TO GET OUT THE WASH. SHE WOULD SLEEP IN THE LAUNDRY IF SHE HAD TO DO THAT. SHE NEVER PAID OUT BABYSITTING. I WAS WITH HER WHEREVER SHE WENT. SHE HAD PEOPLE COME IN TO BRING FOOD. I REMEMBER THAT SHE WOULD HELP PEOPLE IN ONE WAY AND THEY WOULD HELP THE OTHER WAY BY BRINGING HER FOOD. AS FAR AS THE PLEASURES OF LIFE, AT TIMES I THINK SHE

HAD TO BE VERY, VERY , , , AND REALLY WATCH HER PENNIES BUT MY MOM HAD A WAY OF ENJOYING PEOPLE AND ENJOYING HARD WORK AND ENJOYING WHAT SHE WAS DOING. I REMEMBER PEOPLE COMING IN AT THE RIGHT TIME WHEN YOU NEEDED, EVEN AFTER I HAD MY STEPFATHER.

"WHAT ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, DID THEY KNOW ANY ENGLISH WHEN THEY CAME HERE?"

NONE. WHEN MY DAD CAME TO CANADA AND MY MOTHER AT DIFFERENT TIMES EACH OF THEM HAD EDUCATION IN FINLAND. MY DAD WAS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT AND LEARNED 20 YEARS LATER WHEN I MET HIM AT THE LOOMIS LIBRARY, BOTH OF THEM REALLY KEPT AT THE BOOKS AND TRIED TO READ WHATEVER NEWSPAPERS THEY COULD, BOTH ENGLISH AND FINNISH. THEY BOTH TAUGHT THEMSELVES THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

"WELL, MOSTLY ABOUT HOW THEY LEARNED THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE."

BESIDES READING THE ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS AND THE CATALOGS WERE IMPORTANT. WE ORDERED SO MANY THINGS. WHEN MY MOTHER AND DAD MARRIED, THAT'S WHEN WE WENT INTO A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PICTURE WHICH WAS THE COAL MINING TOWN IN WYOMING AND THERE WAS VERY LITTLE OTHER THAN THE OCCASIONAL CATALOG, TO LEARN, UNTIL THEY STARTED INTO THE CITIZENSHIP BUSINESS AND THEY TOOK IT VERY SERIOUSLY.

I DIDN'T SPEAK ENGLISH MYSELF TILL I WENT TO SCHOOL SO MY MOTHER, STEPFATHER AND I LEARNED TOGETHER. THE TEACHER, WHO WAS MY FIRST GRADE TEACHER AND ALSO THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, CAME TO THE HOUSE AND I SAT ON ON THE KNEE OR THE LAP OF EITHER ONE OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS. SO I WAS LEARNING SIMULTANEOUSLY, AND EVENTUALLY CAUGHT ON SO QUICKLY THAT I WAS THEN TEACHING MOM AND DAD AS THEY TRAINED FOR CITIZENSHIP.

I BECAME A SCHOOL CHILD WITH ERNEST INTENTIONS. I WAS SO INTERESTED IN THE LANGUAGE. I TRIED TO KEEP UP THE FINNISH LANGUAGE. MOM AND DAD DID TOO BUT PRIMARILY, THEIRS WAS THE ATTITUDE THAT THEY WERE AMERICANS NOW IN A NEW LAND, THEY WOULD ADOPT THE LANGUAGE AND WE HAD TO BE GOOD CITIZENS.

"DO YOU REMEMBER ANY FINNISH AT ALL? CAN YOU GIVE US A LITTLE FINNISH?"

OH YES, THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND IS MUSIC. I THINK OF MUSIC EVEN NOW. THAT'S PART OF MY RETIREMENT. (SHE SINGS A SONG IN FINNISH).

"WHAT WERE YOU SAYING?"

COME TO OUR HOUSE. WE'RE MAKING HOT BREAD FRESH OUT OF THE OVEN. IF YOU COME ALONE, YOU WILL GET SOME FOR SURE. IF YOU COME WITH OTHERS, EVEN MORE.

(SINGS ANOTHER SONG IN FINNISH) IT'S ABOUT A BIRD. IT FOUND A TURNIP, DROPPED IT ON THE ROAD WHEN THE DUMB VILLAGE BOY CAME ALONG AND PICKED IT UP.

"WE WANT TO COME BACK TO THE PRESENT TIME. I WANT TO ASK THIS QUESTION AND THEN I WILL COME BACK TO MORE OF IT LATER. DO YOU BELONG TO ANY FINNISH SINGING GROUP NOW?"

NO, NOT AS SUCH BUT MY HUSBAND AND I BELONG TO THE FINLANDIA CLUB AND THEY HAVE A DANCE AND SINGING GROUP. I TRY TO BE A PART OF PROVIDING PROGRAMS FOR ENGLISH GROUPS IN WHICH WE BRING THE SINGING AND THE DANCING TO THEM.

"WERE THERE EVER PEOPLE IN WYOMING THAT WERE FINNISH?"

WHERE I WAS BORN THERE WERE SOME AND SEVERAL OF THEM WERE ACTIVE IN POLITICS, I REMEMBER. PARTICULARLY THE FAMILY WITH WHOM MY MOTHER AND I LIVED, IN THEIR BASEMENT, HALOMEN HAD SEVERAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO LIVED . . . . AND THEN THE COAL MINING CAMP ABOUT 30 MILES AWAY WHERE I WENT TO LIVE WITH MY MOM AND STEPDAD WHEN I WAS FOUR. SO THE FINNS WENT FROM . . . . TO GEBO, TO KIRBY, TO SURROUNDING AREAS FOLLOWING THE AGRICULTURAL PURSUITS WHEN THE MINES WEREN'T WORKING IN THE SUMMERTIME. PARTICULARLY WHEN DEPRESSION CAME OR STRIKING CLOSED THE MINES.

SO THE FINNS WERE NOT NUMEROUS IN THERMOPOLIS BUT THEY WERE NUMEROUS IN GEBO. THEY AND THE IRISH, SCOTCH, WALES PEOPLE WERE THE PREDOMINANT LABOR FORCE FOR THE COAL COMPANY IN GEBO. THE COAL COMPANY WAS OWNED BY ENGLISH PEOPLE BUT IN GEBO THERE WAS MORE CELEBRATING OF THE FINNISH HOLIDAYS IN MIND. WE USED THE COMPANY COMMUNITY HALL FOR DIFFERENT SEASONAL EXPERIENCES THAT PERTAINED TO FINLAND BUT THE FINNISH PEOPLE, AT THE SAME TIME, REALLY PARTICIPATED IN THE ENGLISH HOLIDAYS. THEN, THE OTHER GROUP THAT MADE SUCH AN IMPORTANT ETHNIC PART OF THE HERITAGE WAS THE ONES WE CALL THE MONTENEGRANS. PART CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THEIR CUSTUMES WERE SO EXCITING, COMPARED WITH OURS, VERY DIFFERENT BUT THEY DID IT WITH A VENGEANCE SO I WOULD CELEBRATE WITH ALL THOSE WHOSE LAST NAMES USUALLY ENDED WITH A 'VICH'.

I THINK, PROBABLY MORE THAN MOST OF THE FINNISH CHILDREN, I WAS JUST ENRAPTURED WITH THEIR HOLIDAYS AND THEN INVITED THEM TO OURS. THEY HAD LAVISH SPREADS AT THEIR CHRISTMAS EVENTS AND SUCH. FOR OUR CHRISTMAS, FOR INSTANCE, IN OUR HOMES WE WOULD PROCEED TO DO THINGS SUCH AS MELTING OF THE METAL, WHICH IS THEN POURED INTO THE WATER.



"OH TELL US MORE. WE HAVE SOME OF THAT ON SOME OF THE OTHER TAPES."

WE SAVED THE METAL AT TIMES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND KEPT THEM ON A SPECIAL SHELF, I REMEMBER. WHEN THE OCCASION, OR THE CELEBRATING TIME CAME, IF THERE WERE SPECIAL DISHES, SPECIAL BOILERS THAT HAD TO BE RESERVED FOR THAT, NOTHING ELSE. THERE WAS SOME KIND OF RITUAL CONNECTED WITH PUTTING THE METAL INTO SOMETHING, I DON'T REMEMBER TOO MUCH ABOUT THAT. THE CHILDREN, OFTENTIMES, WERE SENT TO BEDROOMS TO STAY BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT US TO GET BURNED. I GUESS THERE WERE ADULT THINGS ALSO, THAT WEREN'T SO MUCH PLEASURE FOR CHILDREN.

I REMEMBER THAT THEY WOULD READ THOSE FORMS, SHAPES THAT CAME OUT WHEN THE POURED METAL WAS HARDENED INTO SUCH BEAUTIFUL SHAPES. I WAS REALLY THRILLED AT ALL THAT.

"IT WAS SORT OF A FORTUNE TELLING, AM I CORRECT ON THAT?"

OH YES, THE FORM THAT IT TOOK, THE TIMING THAT IT TOOK, THE SHAPE; SOMETIMES IT WOULD PILE UP HIGH. THERE WOULD BE DIFFERENT SOUNDS FROM THE ADULTS. WHEN IT SPREAD OUT, SOME OTHER SOUNDS, COLORS, IT'S INTERESTING TRYING TO RECALL ALL THAT ON THE SPOT. THE FOODS WERE BOTH AMERICAN AND FINNISH. ONE THING THAT ADULTS ALWAYS REALLY WERE STRICT ABOUT WAS OUR NOT TOUCHING WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN ALCOHOLIC DRINK. I REMEMBER ONCE I DID. I FELT LIKE I WAS IN . . . . I JUST KIND OF SNEAKED INTO THE ROOM AND I THOUGHT OF HAVING FUN IN THAT BOWL SO I REMEMBER DOING IT AND FEELING IT.

"WHAT ABOUT CHURCH LIFE THEN?"

THERE WAS A VERY STRONG ENGLISH SPEAKING CHURCH AND IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BE OPEN TO THE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS. OR ELSE THE ETHNIC GROUPS DIDN'T FEEL THAT THEY WANTED TO PARTICIPATE,

I CAN'T REALLY SAY THAT. MOM AND DAD CHOSE NOT TO GO. HOWEVER, MOM ENCOURAGED MY RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE OF THE LEADERS IN THE CHURCH BECAUSE MOM SENSED THAT I NEEDED IT. MOM TAUGHT ME FINNISH HYMNS FIRST, AMONG THE THINGS THAT I RECALL NOW. THEY DIDN'T GO TO CHURCH. MOM ALLOWED ME TO GO.

"WHAT CHURCH WAS THAT?"

THAT WAS JUST CALLED THE COMMUNITY CHURCH.

"I WANT TO GO BACK TO THE MELTING OF THE METAL AGAIN AND THE FORTUNE TELLING. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE GIVEN A GOOD FORTUNE OR A BAD FORTUNE?"

OH YES. IT SEEMED THAT PEOPLE KEPT THE ONES THAT REALLY SOUNDED ROSEY AND BEAUTIFUL. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO SAVE THESE. THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE ALMOST HALLOWED THINGS. I REMEMBER, YOU DIDN'T DESECRATE THEM BUT IT SEEMED THAT THE ONES THAT WEREN'T SUCH GOOD SOUNDING FORTUNES WERE THE ONES THAT THEY WOULD BE SULKING ABOUT. THEY WOULD KEEP THEM INTACT.

"WHO WOULD 'READ' THE METAL?"

I REMEMBER ONE PERSON, LUDIA. LUDIA HAD A LOT TO TELL ABOUT IT. AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT ONE WAS HANA WOULD, SEEMED TO DRINK A LITTLE MORE. I GUESS THAT MADE HER FORTUNE TELLING MORE . . . .

"WERE BOTH OF THESE WOMEN?"

YES.

"DID THE MEN EVER TRY TO TELL THE FORTUNE?"

IT SEEMED TO ME THAT WHEN THE MEN DID, IT WAS USUALLY TO, I'M SAYING THIS WITHOUT TOO MUCH BASIS IN FACT, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THEY ACCEPTED THE WOMEN'S FORTUNE TELLING BUT THEY WOULD TAKE EXCEPTION TO IT. IN OTHER WORDS, MAYBE IF APPLIED TO THEM OR THEIR WIFE OR FAMILY, THEY WOULD TAKE EXCEPTION TO IT, BUT MOSTLY IT SEEMED TO BE WOMEN. WOMEN IN REGARD TO THIS METAL POURING, MEN WERE BUSY WITH KEEPING THE FIRE GOING.

"WHAT ABOUT, WAS THERE ANYTHING LIKE A SAUNA THEN?"

THERMOPOLIS HAD, FIRST OF ALL, IT IS STILL THE WORLD'S LARGEST HOT SPRINGS AREA. SO THE FINNISH PEOPLE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE HOT SPRINGS. BUT THERE WERE SAUNAS. LATER, WHEN MOM MARRIED MY STEPDAD AND WE WENT TO GEBO, THE MAIN SAUNA WAS BEHIND OUR HOUSE. HOWEVER, IT BELONGED TO THE COOPERATIVE AND SEVERAL FAMILIES. BATHING AS A FAMILY WAS JUST TAKEN FOR GRANTED. BATHING AS FAMILIES, SEVERAL FAMILIES, IT WAS TAKEN FOR GRANTED. IT WAS A PLACE WHERE OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS WANTED TO COME BUT SOMEHOW THE FINNISH DIDN'T WELCOME THEM UNTIL SOMETIME LATER, THE USE OF THE SAUNA BY OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS.

I THINK IT WAS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY WERE BEGINNING TO SENSE THE SHAME THAT CAME WITH BODY EXPOSURE, THINGS LIKE THAT. THEY DIDN'T KNOW IF THE OTHER PEOPLE WOULD REALLY UNDERSTAND. EVENTUALLY THE SAUNA IDEA SEEMED TO PETER OUT LIKE OTHER THINGS.

"NOW YOU DIDN'T GO TO A FINNISH CHURCH. DID YOU EVER GO TO ANY KIND OF FINNISH EDUCATIONAL SITUATION:?"

NO, MOM AND DAD KEPT VERY CLOSE TO THE SCHOOL, AND ESPECIALLY MY MOTHER, ASSOCIATED WITH THE TEACHERS.

"WAS SHE A TEACHER IN FINLAND?"

SHE WAS, YES. IN FACT, ABOUT THE ONLY THING SHE BROUGHT FROM FINLAND WAS BOOKS. SHE GUARDED THOSE WITH HER LIFE. SHE WOULD TAKE THEM OUT OF THE BIG TRUNK THAT WE HAD WITH MOMENTOS IN IT. THOSE BOOKS WERE REALLY A BIG PART OF MY EARLY EDUCATION. THAT'S WHERE I LEARNED TO READ THE FINNISH LANGUAGE. OF COURSE, THAT'S WHERE YOUR FINNISH KEEPS IMPROVING WITHOUT THERE BEING A LOT OF FINNS AROUND. THE FINNISH PEOPLE DIDN'T GET TOGETHER FOR MANY POLITICAL THINGS AS SUCH. THEY JUST FOLLOWED THE ACTIVITIES IN THE COMMUNITY, THROUGH MAGAZINES BUT THEY LEARNED ABOUT POLITICS THROUGH UNIONIZATION MOSTLY BECAUSE I RECALL FINNISH STRIKE-BREAKING. I RECALL SCABS, THOSE WORDS WERE A VERY EARLY PART OF MY LIFE AND DAD WAS A VERY STRONG UNION MAN. MOST OF THE FINNISH WERE. THE ONE POLITICAL THOUGHT THEY EXPLORED WAS INROADS OF COMMUNISM AND INTO THE POLITICAL THINKING OF FINLAND AND THEN AS IT WAS RELATED TO THE AMERICAN FINNS. AT FIRST THEY WERE PRO-COMMUNISTIC, IF THAT'S THE RIGHT TERM. AND THEN THEIR DESIRE TO BE AMERICAN PREDOMINATED MORE ASCRIBED TO AMERICAN POLITICS.

"NOW, WYOMING WAS VERY EARLY WITH THE VOTE FOR WOMEN. WAS YOUR MOTHER EVER INVOLVED IN ANY OF THAT, AS FAR AS YOU KNOW?"

OH, MOM MADE SURE THAT THE FINNISH WOMEN TOOK THAT SERIOUSLY.

"IN WHAT WAY DID SHE DO THAT?"

SHE WANTED TO MAKE SURE THEY VOTED WHEN IT WAS TIME. THAT WAS A HARD THING TO DO FOR THEM. BUT SHE REALLY PRIZED THE RIGHT TO VOTE. SHE KNEW THAT IT HAD HAPPENED IN FINLAND WHEN WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE WAS THE FIRST IN THE WORLD. IT WAS REAL HARD FOR HER TO HAVE THOSE VERY LIBERAL IDEAS BECAUSE

PREDOMINANTLY THE FINNISH WOMEN WERE NOT, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY, POLITICALLY ORIENTED SO SHE ALWAYS HAD TO KIND OF SOFT-SHOE HER FEELINGS.

"IN THIS AREA OF WYOMING, WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL CARE AT THE TIME THAT YOU WERE GROWING UP?"

WHERE I GREW UP IN GEBO, IT WAS OWNED BY A COAL COMPANY AND THEY ESTABLISHED ALL OF THE MAIN LIFE OF THAT COMMUNITY; COMMUNITY HALL, THE POST OFFICE, THE COMMUNITY LAUNDRY, BUTCHER SHOP, STORE AND HOSPITAL. THE HOSPITAL STOOD ON THE HIGHEST HILL IN THE AREA AND ALL OF THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF ANY MAJOR KIND WAS HANDLED THERE. SOMETIMES THE FINNISH PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT YOU WERE BUTCHERED THERE. THEY DID NOT ASCRIBE TO MUCH OF THE CARE THERE.

"THEY WERE WELL."

THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO HAVE SO MUCH MEDICAL ATTENTION. AT HOME WE HAD CASTER OIL, WATKINS LINAMENT, SOME KINDS OF SALVES. IN FACT, I WENT OUT VERY EARLY AND LIKED TO SELL SALVES. IN ORDER TO GET

"WAS THERE A BRAND NAME TO THE SALVE?"

IT SEEMS TO ME, SOMETHING TO DO WITH CLOVER.

"THE MONEY THAT YOU MADE FROM SELLING THE SALVE, WAS THAT YOURS TO KEEP?"

YES, I FELT LIKE I HAD TO GIVE SOME TO THE FOLKS AND TO THE BROTHERS BUT EXTRA THINGS THAT I KNEW THEY COULDN'T AFFORD, I COULD GET, LIKE AN EXTRA LITTLE PENCIL BOX BECAUSE WE HAD TO BUY OUR OWN PENCIL BOXES AND PAPER FOR SCHOOL. THERE IS A

VERY DEAR SPOT IN MY HEART FOR MUSIC AND THAT CAME ABOUT BECAUSE I WANTED MUSIC LESSONS, I WANTED A PIANO AND THAT WAS ENTIRELY OUT OF THE PICTURE. SO MY THIRD GRADE TEACHER, WHO WAS ALSO MY FOURTH GRADE TEACHER, SENSED THIS LOVE OF MUSIC AND SHE KNEW THE FINNISH PEOPLE LOVED MUSIC, THEY DANCED A LOT, SANG, AND WHAT HAVE YOU. SHE WOULD SEE TO IT THAT I GOT TO STAY AFTER SCHOOL TO HELP HER BECAUSE SHE KNEW I WOULD TINKLE THE PIANO AND TRY TO PLAY.

THE TIME CAME WHEN SHE ASKED "WOULD YOU LIKE LESSONS?" WE DON'T HAVE MONEY. "WOULD YOU LIKE LESSONS?" YES. WE HAVE NO PIANO. "IF YOU HAD A PIANO, WOULD YOU LIKE LESSONS?" YES. ALL RIGHT, YOU HAVE MOM AND DAD COME UP AFTER WORK." SHE NAMED THE DAY. "AFTER YOU HAVE HAD DINNER AND DAD IS WASHED UP FROM THE MINE, HAVE THEM COME UP." SO WE DID SHE WAS VERY DEAR. "YOU KNOW, I DON'T HAVE TIME TO DO MY LAUNDRY BECAUSE I TEACH SCHOOL, SUNDAY SCHOOL. COULD YOU HELP ME WITH MY LAUNDRY. I NEED HELP VERY BADLY."

SO THIS WAS HOW IT WAS WORKED OUT. SHE WOULD PREPARE HER LAUNDRY. I WOULD GO GET IT IN WARM WEATHER IN A LITTLE, RED WAGON AND THEN I WOULD TAKE IT BACK HOME AND DAD WOULD USE THE WASHBOARD UNTIL WE WERE ONE OF THE FIRST PEOPLE TO GET A WASHING MACHINE, MAMA SAW TO THAT. GATHER THE CLOTHES AND USE THE WASHBOARD. MAMA IRONED IT WITH A BIG IRON AND I WOULD SOMETIMES HELP HER. THEN I WOULD GET IT BACK TO MISS LAUTON'S HOUSE. THAT PAID FOR MY LESSONS.

IN ORDER TO HAVE PRACTICE, OF COURSE, I HAD TO HAVE A PIANO. RIGHT THEN AND THERE ON THE SPOT SHE SAID, "I HAVE THREE KEYS AND ONE OF THEM IS FOR THE HOUSE. ONE IS FOR THE CHURCH AND ONE IS FOR THE SCHOOL. WHENEVER THE PIANOS ARE NOT BEING USED USE THIS KEY. SHE TRUSTED ME AND MY FOLKS

TRUSTED ME AND I GOT TO PRACTICE . . . .

"HOW DID SHE KNOW THAT YOU HAD THIS SPECIAL LOVE, AND ALSO, SHE MUST HAVE RECOGNIZED YOUR ABILITY, HOW DID SHE RECOGNIZE THIS?"

BECAUSE SHE KNEW MY MOM, THAT WAS IMPORTANT. SHE KNEW THIS OTHER LADY, AN ENGLISH LADY WAS LIKE A BENEFACTRESS TO ME, WHO TOOK ME TO CHURCH AND THINGS LIKE THAT. SHE EVIDENTLY HEARD ME AS I PLAYED AND SANG AROUND. I DIDN'T HAVE A FINE VOICE BUT I JUST LOVED THINGS THAT WERE MUSICAL. SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL PERSON. SHE ARRANGED FOR CHILDREN FROM FINNISH HOMES TO GET EXTRA LITTLE BOOKS. WE WOULD SAVE PENNIES IN ORDER THAT WE MIGHT GET, HAVE INCENTIVE, SHE WOULD HAVE US SAVE COINS AND MAYBE 49 CENTS FOR A LITTLE BOOK, \$1.49 FOR . . . . BUT THEY WOULD BE AVAILABLE THROUGH A PERSON WHO PASSED THROUGH WITH BOOKS AND OTHER PAPERS AND NEWSPAPERS AND THINGS LIKE THAT.

"WAS SHE FINNISH AT ALL?"

No. SHE TOOK TO THE FINNISH COMMUNITY.